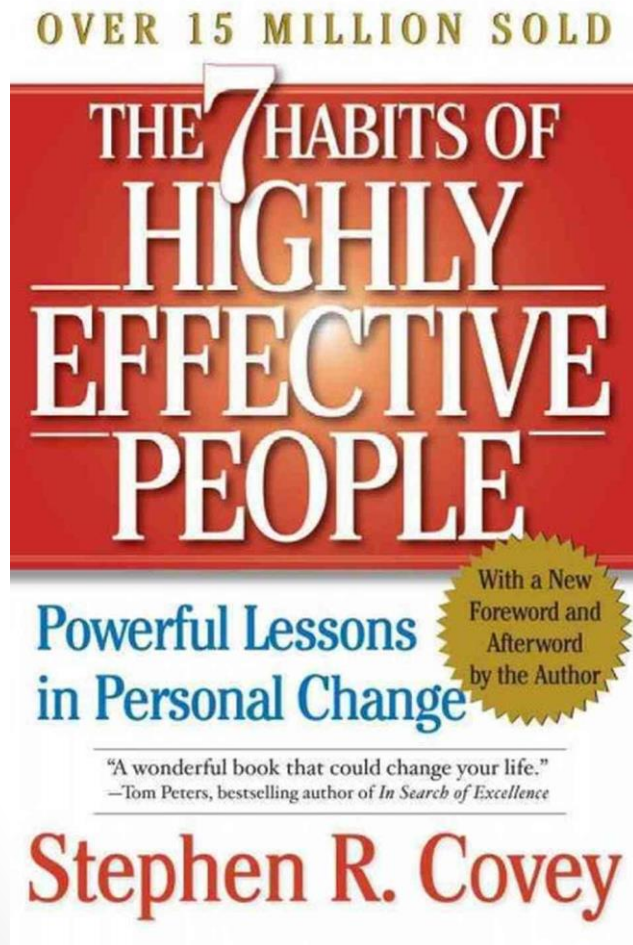


The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People

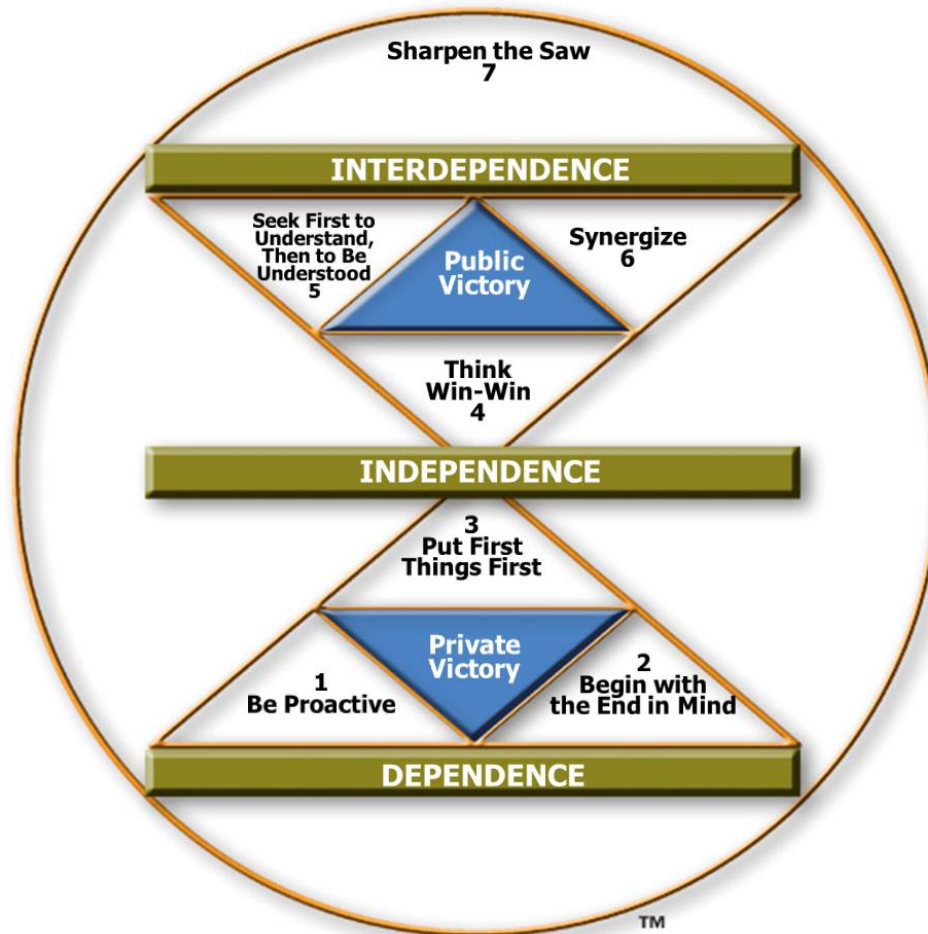
Habit 5: Seek First to Understand,
Then to be Understood

The Book and Author



- Written by Stephen R. Covey.
- Graduated from Harvard University with an MBA.
- Chairman of the Covey Leadership Center and the Institute for Principle-Centered Leadership
- Meant to help people solve professional and personal dilemmas through principled living.

Overview



Communication Barriers

- The key to interpersonal success is communication.
- However, we often have a very hard time communicating.
- We use the same words but mean different things.
- We usually acknowledge this.
- BUT, we attempt to fix this by trying to make the other person understand us without trying to understand them.
- This doesn't work because they're trying to do the same thing.

Empathy

- Empathy is the most basic skill needed for proper communication.
- It is the ability to understand another person's point of view.
- It is NOT sympathy.
 - Sympathy is judging somebody to be right in a certain situation.
 - It's agreement, not understanding.
- Empathy means we can see ourselves and the world from another person's perspective.

Empathic Listening

- Empathic Listening is listening with the express intent to empathize.
- This often involves responding with questions.
 - Questions also help your credibility with the other person. It makes them feel that you are invested.
- Remember, you want to understand them, not judge them.
- Often, what they're saying isn't what they're thinking. They're trying to avoid upsetting you, so you need to get them comfortable to dig deeper into themselves.

Autobiographical Listening

- This is listening with the purpose of filling the gaps with our own anecdotes and emotions.
- This is our usual responses to difficult conversations.
- We think we're understanding them, but all we're really doing is putting them into our shoes rather than the other way around.
- This make the other person feel more alienated.
 - They think that they don't matter because we don't want to see things from their point of view.
 - They get the wrong ideas because the answers we share are specific to us.
- There are four basic ways we respond like this.

Evaluating

- You're right, wrong, or somewhere in between, but that's it.
- This is a very sterile way to respond to people.
- Don't do this unless specifically asked and even then maybe not.



Probing



- The five W's (who, what, where, when, why)
- These aren't meaningful questions. They're conversation fillers.
- It feels like an interrogation and will be treated like one.

Advising

- We give advice based on our own experiences.
- This is usually well intentioned, but unless asked for, is not very welcome.
- Often, the answers we give aren't the right ones anyways.



Interpreting



- We try to fit their problems into our own frame of reference.
- People can feel anywhere from frustrated to insulted when we do this.
- If you're having to interpret, you haven't empathized enough yet.

Perception

- What we see and what the other person sees can be two entirely different things.
 - However, they can also both be correct.
- The fundamental challenge of communication is seeing the same thing as your counterpart.
- Adopt and understand their experience.
- Don't be afraid to get things wrong. Be afraid not to try.

Application

- Applying this idea is easy. Just begin talking to people.
- Get inside their heads a bit. Ask them what they see or think about certain things.
 - If you still don't understand, tell them. They want to be understood, so they'll probably open up a bit more.
- This works in private and public life.
- Sincerity is key. People don't want to talk with those they think are trying to take advantage of them.
- Don't judge. Save the judging for after you empathize and when specifically asked. Judgement hurts your ability to get a clearer understanding.